DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 454 978 PS 029 604

AUTHOR	Sorensen, Elaine; Turner, Mark
TITLE	Barriers in Child Support Policy: A Literature Review.
INSTITUTION	Pennsylvania Univ., Philadelphia. National Center on Fathers and Families.
SPONS AGENCY	Annie E. Casey Foundation, Baltimore, MD.; Ford Foundation, New York, NY.; Mott (C.S.) Foundation, Flint, MI.
REPORT NO	NCOFF-LR-SB-96-04
PUB DATE	1996-05-00
NOTE	26p.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Center on Fathers and Families, University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education, 3700 Walnut Street, Box 58, Philadelphia, PA 19104-6216. Tel: 215-573-5500; Fax: 215-573-5508; e-mail: mailbox@ncoff.gse.upenn.edu. For full text: http://www.ncoff.gse.upenn.edu.
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses (070)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Agencies; *Child Support; *Children; Disadvantaged; *Fathers; Legislation; Literature Reviews; *Parent Child Relationship; Parent Responsibility; Parent Role; *Public Policy; Social Services
IDENTIFIERS	*Barriers to Participation

ABSTRACT

This review examines ways in which institutions and agencies act as barriers to paternal involvement, particularly for unmarried fathers and fathers of color. These fathers are frequently portrayed as unwilling, uninterested parents who must be forced by the government to take responsibility for their children, and this perspective lays the foundation for punitive policies and practices. The review begins by addressing research that has sought to determine the actual amount and kinds of support disadvantaged fathers provide for their children. The next sections describe how specific policies actually deter young men's involvement with their families and suggest ways of making legislation and social service agencies more conducive to fathers. The review concludes with recommendations for policy and future research. Throughout the review, the argument is made that while policies and practices may not actively seek to discourage paternal participation in the family, negative assumptions that result in the dismissal of fathers as viable parents result in fathers' disengagement. (Contains 67 references.) (Author/KB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 454 978

Barriers in Child Support Policy: A Literature Review

LR-SB-96-04
May 1996

by

Elaine Sorensen
and
Mark Turner
The Urban Institute

Commissioned by the

National Center on
Fathers and Families

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Susan Haider

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

NCOFF
National Center on Fathers and Families

National Center on Fathers and Families
University of Pennsylvania
3700 Walnut Street, Box 58
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6216

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PS 029604

Barriers in Child Support Policy:
A Literature Review
LR-SB-96-04
May 1996

by

Elaine Sorensen
and
Mark Turner
The Urban Institute

Commissioned by the

National Center on
Fathers and Families

The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of The Urban Institute.

National Center on Fathers and Families

National Center on Fathers and Families
University of Pennsylvania
3700 Walnut Street, Box 58
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6216

Barriers in Child Support Policy: A Literature Review
by Elaine Sorensen and Mark Turner
©1996 National Center on Fathers and Families

Abstract

This review examines the ways in which institutions and agencies act as barriers to paternal involvement, particularly for unmarried fathers and fathers of color. These fathers are frequently portrayed as unwilling, uninterested parents who must be forced by the government to take responsibility for their children, and this perspective lays the foundation for punitive policies and practices. The review begins by addressing research that has sought to determine the actual amount and kinds of support disadvantaged fathers provide for their children. The next sections describe how specific policies actually deter young men's involvement with their families and suggest ways of making legislation and social service agency practices more conducive to fathers. The review concludes with recommendations for policy and future research. Throughout the review, the author makes the point that while policies and practices may not actively seek to discourage paternal participation in the family, negative assumptions that result in the dismissal of fathers as viable parents result in fathers' discouragement.

The National Center on Fathers and Families (NCOFF) is a policy research center that is practice-focused and practice-derived. Based at the University of Pennsylvania, NCOFF's mission is to improve the life chances of children and the efficacy of families by facilitating the effective involvement of fathers in caring for, supporting, and advocating on behalf of their children. Efforts are organized around three interdependent approaches: program development, a policy research and policymakers engagement component, and dissemination activities. NCOFF's research plan is developed around seven "Core Learnings," distilled from the experiences of programs and agencies serving fathers, mothers, and children around the country.

Core funding for NCOFF is provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Additional support is provided by the Ford Foundation and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

About the Authors

Elaine Sorensen is a Senior Research Associate at The Urban Institute.

Mark Turner is a Research Associate at The Urban Institute.

Barriers In Child Support Policy: A Literature Review

by Elaine Sorensen and Mark Turner

INTRODUCTION

Child support policy has changed dramatically during the past 20 years. Prior to 1975, child support enforcement was governed primarily by each state's family law and enforced by the court and local authorities. Relatively little federal or state dollars were spent on enforcing child support. Since then, the federal government has taken an ever-increasing role in regulating and funding child support enforcement. Today, we have an active federal/state partnership in the area of child support enforcement that costs over $2 billion per year to administer.

Congress took its first major commitment to the area of child support enforcement in 1975, when it enacted Title IV-D of the Social Security Act. This legislation was in response to the growing number of families receiving AFDC who had a father living elsewhere. By the early 1970s, welfare costs had risen dramatically and most families receiving AFDC were no longer widowed, but were either divorced or separated or had never been married to the father. The Child Support Enforcement (CSE) Program was seen as a way of gaining financial support from noncustodial parents of AFDC families in order to reduce welfare costs.

Since 1975, Congress has returned to the issue of child support on several occasions and each time it has strengthened child support enforcement. Today, the basic message of the CSE program is that all noncustodial fathers should pay child support. Policymakers have tended to view the nonpayment of child support as a matter of volition rather than lack of ability, overlooking the fact that many noncustodial fathers have a limited ability to pay child support. As a result, child support policy has relied on a series of enforcement tools and ignored policies that assist noncustodial fathers in overcoming the economic barriers that many of them face in providing for their children.

In a similar fashion, research on child support policy has tended to document the poverty experienced by single-parent families and the ineffectiveness of the child support enforcement system in transferring meaningful amounts of child support to children. To the extent that noncustodial fathers are discussed, they are either depicted as "deadbeat dads" who can afford to pay child support but choose not to do so, or "beaten down dads" who are willing to pay child support but cannot afford to do so (Garfinkel, McLanahan, and Hanson 1995). Policy research has rarely considered the systemic barriers within child support policy that discourage noncustodial fathers' involvement with their children.

The purpose of this paper is to review the current literature on child support policy and highlight those elements of this literature that identify barriers within child support policy that discourage noncustodial fathers' involvement in the lives of their children. We found that very little of the child support literature to date actually discusses barriers to noncustodial fathers' involvement. "Teasing" out information about these barriers was more difficult than one might have thought. We begin with a brief overview of federal child support policy. We then review the existing child support literature. We end by offering suggestions on further research that would better identify and understand existing barriers within child support policy to fathers' participation in the lives of their children.

AN OVERVIEW OF FEDERAL CHILD SUPPORT POLICY

Prior to 1975, the federal government's role in the area of child support was extremely limited. Although Congressional interest in child support enforcement dates back to 1950, when it enacted legislation that required state welfare agencies to notify law enforcement officials when a child receiving AFDC had been deserted or abandoned, its willingness to pay for and oversee enforcement of child support only began in 1975 (Solomon 1989). Until that point, child support enforcement had been largely left to the states and was implemented locally by the courts, which were guided by each state's family law statutes.

In response to the growing number of single-parent families and their dependence on welfare, the federal government made its first major commitment to the area of child support enforcement in 1975 by enacting Title IV-D of the Social Security Act. This legislation was the federal government's first step toward paying a large share of and overseeing child support enforcement.

This legislation established the federal/state partnership in the area of child support that remains largely unchanged today. It established the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE), whose purpose is to provide leadership in the planning, development, management, and coordination of the child support enforcement program. It left basic responsibility for administering the child support enforcement program to the states. States have responsibility for all activities necessary to collect child support payments, including locating absent parents, establishing paternity, establishing and enforcing child support orders, and monitoring and distributing collections. This legislation also agreed to provide federal reimbursement for about three-quarters of each state's child support enforcement costs (Solomon 1989). The federal government's reimbursement rate for administrative expenditures has fallen from 75 percent to 66 percent, but child support enforcement is still largely federally funded. Thus, this legislation and subsequent child support policy legislation has resulted in a federal/state partnership that is largely federally funded but allows for considerable state variation in administering this program.

One of the most important aspect of the 1975 legislation regarding noncustodial fathers' involvement in their children's lives was the requirement that applicants and recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) assign their rights to child support to the state and cooperate in identifying the noncustodial parent. This mandate meant that any child support collected on behalf of an AFDC recipient would not go directly to the children, but would be used to offset AFDC costs for that family. This legislation created a link between AFDC and child support policies that remains today. This link was subsequently modified in 1984 to allow AFDC families to keep the first $50 a month of child support paid on their behalf in addition to their AFDC grant, while the remaining child support went to offset welfare costs.

Approximately ten years later, in 1984, Congress revisited the issue of child support and enacted the Child Support Enforcement Amendments. At that time, child support collections were exceedingly low and many argued that the lack of a strong child support enforcement system contributed to child poverty and welfare dependency. The centerpiece of this legislation was the federal requirement that each state establish income withholding for the enforcement of child support orders if noncustodial parents fell behind in their payments. This enforcement remedy was supplemented by others such as property liens, tax refund intercepts, credit bureau reporting, and expedited legal processes to establish paternity. States were also required to formulate child support guidelines for determining child support awards, but judges were not required to use the

guidelines when setting awards. Finally, the federal government began to provide states with federal incentive payments for collecting child support on behalf of both AFDC and non-AFDC cases.

In 1988, Congress revised its child support policies in the larger context of welfare reform when it enacted the Family Support Act. The child support provisions of this legislation strengthened many of the changes made in 1984. For example, it required the use of automatic wage withholding for all new child support awards as of 1994, not just those that were delinquent. It required the judicial system to use state child support guidelines as presumptive when determining child support awards. Finally, it required that child support orders to be reviewed and, if necessary, modified at regular intervals for AFDC recipients and at the request of non-AFDC recipients.

The 1988 Family Support Act also made several changes in the area of paternity establishment. It set goals for the number of paternities established by the states, with financial penalties to be assessed when states did not meet these goals (Meyer 1992). It also required parties in contested cases to use genetic tests if requested by any party. It encouraged states to establish civil (rather than criminal) processes for paternity establishment, and it established time limits for processing paternity cases.

In 1993, Congress revisited the issue of paternity establishment. As part of the Omnibus Reconciliation Act, Congress required states to develop a simple administrative process for voluntarily acknowledging paternity and required that these procedures be available in hospitals so that parents could establish paternity at the time of their baby's birth if they wished to do so.

Since 1994, Congress has once again been considering legislation to reform the welfare system. It passed welfare reform legislation in late 1995 that included child support provisions, but President Clinton vetoed this legislation for reasons that did not pertain to child support. The key child support reforms included in this legislation were: the expansion of paternity and enforcement authority, the automation and centralization of IV-D records, and the establishment of a new-hire directory at the state and federal level.

Specific elements of the 1995 welfare reform legislation directly affected noncustodial parents. This legislation included a work requirement for noncustodial parents who were delinquent in their child support payments if their children received IV-A assistance. In addition, it would have disqualified noncustodial parents who were delinquent in their child support payments from receiving food stamps.

Other elements of welfare reform that would have had an indirect effect on noncustodial fathers included significant changes to the IV-A program, better known as the AFDC program. For example, the $50 pass-through would have been eliminated, but states would have the option to use their own funds to pay for a child support disregard. This would have meant that children receiving IV-A assistance would no longer receive the first $50 of child support paid on their behalf; instead states could use all of the child support payments to offset IV-A assistance.

In addition, under the proposed welfare reform legislation recipients of IV-A assistance would still have to assign their support rights to the state and cooperate in establishing paternity and obtaining support for their children, but states would define cooperation. Currently, "cooperation" basically means that an AFDC recipient must appear before the child support agency, a judicial procedure, or administrative hearing when requested, and provide any information about the noncustodial parent or attest to the lack thereof under oath. Under this proposed legislation, states

would be allowed to alter this definition. For example, states could require that IV-A recipients provide the child support enforcement agency with the social security number of the noncustodial parent.

Welfare reform continues to be debated in the current Congress and there is still a distinct possibility that these and other changes to the welfare and child support system will be enacted. Any reform in this area will undoubtedly lead to greater pressure on noncustodial parents to pay child support.

EXISTING LITERATURE ON CHILD SUPPORT POLICIES

In this section, we divide child support research into the following categories: ability to pay child support, paternity establishment, child support enforcement, and access to children. We first attempt to show that there is a sizable minority of noncustodial fathers who have a limited ability to pay child support. We then discuss the CSE system, dividing it into two parts--paternity establishment and child support enforcement. We end with a review of the literature on access to children. Under each area, we discuss the major findings and relate this research to the issue of noncustodial fathers' involvement.

Can Noncustodial Fathers Afford to Pay?

In the popular press, noncustodial fathers are depicted as "deadbeat dads" who have the financial ability to pay child support but are unwilling to do so. Until recently, we did not have a national data source that could confirm or deny this popular view of noncustodial fathers. Research that examines the extent to which noncustodial fathers can afford to pay child support is a critical step in the future development of child support policy.

Several studies now show that noncustodial fathers as a whole can afford to pay more child support, but that a sizable minority of noncustodial fathers are poor themselves and unable to contribute substantially to their children living elsewhere (Sorensen 1995, Garfinkel et al. 1995). Prior to this research, numerous studies had been conducted on subsamples of noncustodial fathers. Much of this work identified groups of noncustodial fathers who were poor and unable to substantially contribute to their children living elsewhere, but there was no way to generalize from these studies (Furstenberg et al. 1992, Sullivan 1989, Stier and Tienda 1993).

Sorensen (1995) was the first to provide a national profile of noncustodial fathers' ability to pay child support using a nationally representative survey. She used the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) to examine the economic and social circumstances of noncustodial fathers. This survey does not ask men directly whether they are noncustodial fathers, but instead asks a series of questions that can be used to identify noncustodial fathers. First, it asks men how many children they have ever fathered and how many of those children currently live with them. It also asks adults whether they are paying child support. Based on this information, Sorensen reports that the average personal income of noncustodial fathers in 1990 was about $23,000. For black noncustodial fathers, the average income that same year was much lower, averaging between $11,000 and $15,700. She finds that only 8 to 14 percent of all noncustodial fathers were poor, but that 14 to 40 percent of black noncustodial fathers were poor. Based on this evidence, Sorensen concludes that the "average" noncustodial father could pay more child support, but that a sizable minority of noncustodial fathers--especially among black fathers--are poor themselves and have a limited ability to pay child support.

Garfinkel et al. (1995) use the National Longitudinal Survey of Family and Households to examine the economic status of noncustodial fathers. They find that noncustodial fathers' personal income averaged $27,000 in 1993. That also find that noncustodial fathers who pay child support have, on average, about $12,000 more in personal income than fathers who fail to pay. Only 10 percent of all noncustodial fathers had annual incomes that were less than $10,000 in 1993, but among nonpayers, 30 percent had incomes that low. Thus, Garfinkel et al. also conclude that noncustodial fathers as a whole could pay more child support, but that some have a limited ability to pay.

Prior to Sorensen's work, the only method of estimating noncustodial fathers' incomes was to impute it based on the characteristics of custodial mothers. This research was first developed by Garfinkel and Oellerich (1989) and was most recently updated by Miller et al. (1994). This last study estimates average incomes of $23,801 for noncustodial fathers in 1990. These studies have not generally been used to describe the diversity of incomes among noncustodial fathers because the indirect method of determining incomes is not particularly well suited for subgroup analyses. Nonetheless, this work was the first to show that noncustodial fathers could pay as much as three times as much as they are actually paying, a finding that Sorensen confirmed in her more recent work (1995).

Considerable research has been conducted on the economic consequences of divorce (for a review, see Bassi et al. 1990). A number of researchers used the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) to follow couples after divorce to assess the relative economic status of mothers and fathers (Duncan and Hoffman 1985, Hill 1988, Nichols-Casebolt 1986). Others have used samples taken from divorce court records (McLindon 1987). All of these studies show that the economic consequences of divorce are less severe for men than for women and children.

Very few studies have examined the economic status of men who father children outside marriage and none of those that do so has been based on nationally representative data for this population. Instead, studies tend to be state-specific, relying on court records for their source of information (Sonenstein and Calhoun 1990, Danziger and Nichols-Casebolt 1990, Phillips and Garfinkel 1993). This research finds that fathers of children born out of wedlock are considerably poorer than divorced fathers. Nonetheless, several studies of paternity cases in Wisconsin find that these fathers' incomes increase dramatically after paternity is established--often to a level comparable with the incomes of divorced fathers (Phillips and Garfinkel 1993). The representativeness of these data is questionable, however, even for Wisconsin because many of the men in the sample are missing information about their income and many men, especially unmarried fathers, have never established paternity and therefore are not in the sample.

Another source of information on the economic status of young noncustodial fathers is the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY). Using these data, Lerman (1993) and Pirog-Good and Good (1995) find that noncustodial fathers have very low incomes initially, but that their incomes rise over time. Neither of these authors, however, examined what happens to poor young noncustodial fathers over time. It may be that the "average" noncustodial father's income rises over time, but that low-income noncustodial fathers are not as fortunate. Furthermore, noncustodial fathers are underrepresented in the NLSY (Mott 1985), but neither of these authors addressed this underrepresentation. Most likely, fathers missing in the NLSY are poorer than those in the survey; thus, this research overstates young noncustodial fathers' ability to pay child support.

Some studies have attempted to estimate the incomes of noncustodial fathers who have children receiving AFDC (Penkroft 1989, Haskins 1988, Phillips and Garfinkel 1993). These fathers are of particular policy concern because of their children's welfare dependency. Child support and welfare policies expect these fathers to pay child support, but the question has always been whether or not they could afford it. Haskins (1988) examined data on noncustodial fathers with a child support order in the North Carolina IV-D system, about half of whom had children receiving AFDC. He found that the average incomes of these fathers was about $10,000 in 1984, whether or not their children received AFDC.

Penkroft (1989) examined noncustodial fathers of AFDC children without a child support order using administrative data in 11 states. He selected this group because he thought they would be the least able to pay child support. He found that over half of these fathers did not have a social security number in the administrative record and that earnings information for these fathers was therefore not available. For those with a social security number in the AFDC file, in 1985, 37 percent had no reported earnings, 44 percent had earnings below $10,000 in 1985, and only 19 percent had earnings above $10,000.

Based on Wisconsin court data, Phillips and Garfinkel (1993) argue that the incomes of AFDC fathers are initially low, but that they increase dramatically after paternity establishment or divorce. Again, the representativeness of these data is questionable, even for Wisconsin because many of the men in the sample are missing information about their income and many men, especially unmarried fathers, have never established paternity and therefore are not in the sample.

In addition to the quantitative studies, there is an emerging set of qualitative studies that examine young inner city fathers (Furstenberg 1995, Stier and Tienda 1993, Sullivan 1993, Anderson 1993, Achatz and MacAllum 1994, Bloom and Sherwood 1994). This research illuminates how these men perceive and execute their role as fathers in the context of their community and the child support enforcement system. This literature indicates that many young inner city fathers want to be involved with their children but that many factors get in the way. Most of these studies show that these men are weakly attached to the labor force and thus lack the skills and resources to financially support their children on a regular basis. Personal relations between the mothers and fathers can also be colored by mistrust and ongoing struggles over support, visitation, and relationship issues, struggles that can undermine fathers' commitments to remain involved. Some ethnographic studies argue that African-American males operate within a peer culture that promotes irresponsibility and criminal activity, which results from a lack of legitimate opportunities (Anderson 1993).

Paternity Establishment

Paternity establishment is the first step in the child support enforcement process. Without it, the CSE program cannot collect child support. In addition, paternity establishment provides the child with a legal claim to all of the benefits and rights enjoyed by marital children. These benefits and rights include: family medical history, medical insurance, social security, inheritance, workers' compensation, veteran's benefits (Wattenberg 1993). The emotional and psychological benefits of paternity include the opportunity to identify with the paternal half of a child's ancestral roots, and to know and explore family heritage, culture and religious ties. Paternity establishment may also lead to the opportunity for nonmarital fathers to establish a legal parent-child relationship and to exercise paternal contact and access to the paternal family.

Despite the benefits of paternity establishment for the well-being of nonmarital children, American society has not placed a premium on establishing paternity. Although this process has undergone tremendous change during the past few years, we show below that many custodial and noncustodial parents are still reluctant to establish paternity. Below we offer an historical overview on paternity establishment, describe the current paternity establishment process, and discuss reasons for custodial and noncustodial parents' reluctance to establish paternity through this process.

Historical Perspective. Until the late twentieth century most states relied on the Elizabethan Poor Laws as precedent for paternity laws and procedures. Two features of these laws greatly affected these procedures (Melli 1992). First, these laws considered nonmarital intercourse to be "a sin and a crime--both a moral and a government offense" (Melli 1992). As such, a paternity suit was a criminal action: alleged fathers were arrested, due process was ensured, and proof beyond a reasonable doubt was required.

The second feature of Elizabethan Poor Law that greatly affected paternity processes in the United States was the fact that the primary aim of establishing paternity was the reimbursement of public expenditures on the child's behalf (Melli 1992). Thus, paternity actions have historically been connected to repaying the government for expenses incurred in support of the child.

As a result of this legal heritage, most states used a criminal procedure rather than a civil one or an administrative process to establish paternity until the 1980s. Furthermore, the primary purpose of the action was to gain financial support for the child. Thus, many states limited the right to bring a paternity action to the mother or government authority that was providing support for the child. Finally, many states denied nonmarital children the rights of paternal support, inheritance, custody, name, and claims under such programs as Worker's Compensation (Nichols-Casebolt 1988).

In response to the growing number of children born out of wedlock and their dependence on welfare, the federal government has taken an increasingly active role in promoting paternity establishment. In 1984, Congress passed a law that encouraged states to simplify paternity procedures through "expedited process," and extended the statute of limitations for establishing paternity to the child's eighteenth birthday. In 1988, Congress required states to increase the number of cases in which they establish paternity, it required all parties in a contested paternity case to submit to genetic testing upon request of any party, and it encouraged states to institute civil procedures (Wattenberg 1993).

More recently, Congress required that all states develop a simple administrative process for voluntarily acknowledging paternity and create a hospital-based program for voluntary acknowledgments. This is an important step for the federal government to have taken because it requires states to provide the opportunity to establish paternity voluntarily outside of the CSE office at a time when parents are most apt to want to establish paternity.

As a result of these federal initiatives, paternity establishment practices have changed dramatically during the past few years. Today, as we explain below, this process is no longer a criminal matter, but handled administratively or in civil court. Furthermore, establishing paternity is no longer for the sole purpose of gaining financial support for the child, it also gives nonmarital children access to medical information, their fathers' government benefits, inheritance, and social support. Nonetheless, we also show below that many noncustodial fathers and custodial mothers are still reluctant to pursue paternity through this process.

Administrative Structure. In the last decade, several researchers have examined the paternity establishment process at the local level (Holcomb, Seefeldt, and Sonenstein 1992, Adams, Landsberger, and Hecht 1992, Adams, Landsberger, and Cobler 1992, Nichols-Casebolt 1992). Their studies describe the current process and identify the strengths and weaknesses of these programs.

The only national survey of paternity establishment practices was conducted by the Urban Institute, which surveyed 250 counties in 1990. Based on this survey, Holcomb, Seefeldt, and Sonenstein (1992) identified three basic types of organization for the agency responsible for paternity establishment. Forty-three percent of the counties surveyed used a "human services agency model," in which paternity is handled by an agency that is not primarily legal; these agencies typically have their own in-house legal staff. About one fifth of the counties used a "legal agency model," in which the IV-D office contracts with private attorneys or contracts with or is based in the prosecuting attorney's or the attorney general's office. Finally, about one-third of the counties used a "two-agency transfer model," in which a human services agency typically handles voluntary cases but transfers any contested cases to a legal agency.

Sonenstein, Holcomb, and Seefeldt (1993) also found that several factors increased paternity establishment rates, including client composition, investments in the program, and the use of certain practices. First, they found that large urban counties with high population growth rates and high unemployment had significantly lower rates of paternity establishment than rural and small urban counties. Second, they found that counties with lower than average caseloads per AFDC worker and those allocating more funds to their child support system had higher paternity establishment rates. Third, they found the following practices were more likely to be associated with improved paternity establishment rates: 1) checking criminal and school records to locate putative fathers; 2) using computers to generate standardized forms for use in the process; 3) offering to pay for genetic tests when the parents wanted them; 4) offering the parents multiple opportunities to enter a consent agreement; and 5) using social service workers to handle uncontested paternities while referring contested cases to a legal agency.

The U.S. General Accounting Office (1987) also looked at a cross section of counties and identified several problems with the paternity establishment process. They included: poor management practices including inadequate efforts to obtain information about some absent fathers, premature closing of cases for such reasons as the father's incarceration, and insufficient case tracking and monitoring so that cases go unattended for long periods.

Nichols-Casebolt's (1992) analysis of two counties in Arizona reveals the cumbersome administrative structures of the paternity establishment process. Establishing paternity usually involves at least five major stages. The process is generally initiated by the mother or the welfare agency if the mother is already receiving or plans to receive public assistance; an intake interviewer obtains information about the absent father; the father is located; the father is notified of the allegation; and paternity is adjudicated.

Adams, Landsbergen, and Hecht (1992) and Adams, Landsbergen, and Cobler (1992) identified factors that inhibit parents from establishing legal paternity. These barriers primarily emerge from numerous bureaucratic impediments to speedy paternity establishment based on court adjudication, including fragmented service delivery, lack of communication between agencies with different practices, lengthy delivery delays, and blood testing delays. These requirements can be costly and time consuming. Both custodial and noncustodial parents may be discouraged by these delays and inconsistencies.

Since 1993, states have been required to create a voluntary paternity acknowledgment process in the hospitals. Because these programs are so new, only a couple of studies have been completed that attempt to assess how this process has been going in a limited number of locations (Pearson and Thoennes 1995, Williams, Venohr, and Baxter 1995). These studies show that in-hospital paternity establishment programs have increased the voluntary paternity acknowledgement rate. Pearson and Thoennes (1995) found that if unmarried parents are systematically approached, the benefits of paternity are explained, interested parents are assisted in the process of acknowledging paternity, and the process of establishing paternity is extremely simple that voluntary paternity acknowledgements can increase dramatically. Williams et al. (1995) attribute the success of the in-hospital program in Massachusetts, in large part, to the fact that the paternity acknowledgement process has become an integral component of the birth registration process and does not rely extensively on the IV-D agency.

However, these studies still find that most nonmarital births do not have paternity voluntarily established. Even in Massachusetts, who report the highest voluntary paternity acknowledgement rates, report that only 64 percent of nonmarital births have paternity voluntarily established. Below, we discuss some of the reasons why custodial and noncustodial parents are reluctant to establish paternity.

Why Custodial and Noncustodial Parents are Reluctant to Establish Paternity. Most authors who have examined paternity practices cite client reluctance as a barrier to increased paternity rates, although they attribute this reluctance to different causes. Wattenberg was among the first authors to examine these issues (1993). Her research is based on three interrelated studies on paternity establishment practices for AFDC recipients in Minnesota from 1983-1990. She indicates that although young parents had positive associations with paternity and fatherhood, their perceptions of the establishment process were extremely negative. They saw paternity procedures enmeshed in a court system that is both capricious and punitive. Mothers often did not initiate legal paternity establishment because they did not want to get their boyfriends "in trouble." Many of them shared the popular belief in some communities that having paternity adjudicated could lead to imprisonment of fathers. In some cases, mothers did not wish to continue their relationship with the father and wanted to retain control over childrearing and decision making, control that legal paternity might threaten.

Many studies identify lack of information by both mothers and fathers about the reasons for establishing paternity as a reason for non-participation in the paternity process (Nichols-Casebolt 1992). Not understanding the importance of paternity means parents do not act early on to address the issue. Instead, it may not be until the mother applies for AFDC that anyone explains why paternity establishment is important to the child, but as Edin suggests below, this may not be persuasive enough for AFDC mothers. Fathers may never be told.

More recently, Edin interviewed 213 AFDC mothers in four cities and found that about half of them either lied about the identify of the father of their children or had hidden crucial identifying information from the enforcement agency and thus paternity had not been established in these cases (1994). Edin found that AFDC mothers acted strategically to maximize their family's economic and emotional well-being and those decisions did not always mean working within the formal child support enforcement system. On the contrary, some of the mothers interviewed by Edin were actually better off because they received from the absent father more than $50 a month--the amount that the formal child support enforcement system would have passed onto them. Many others, however, were concerned about the emotional ties that their children had with their

fathers, which they feared may be jeopardized by turning the fathers over to the child support enforcement system. Other mothers feared physical violence if they reported the fathers to the authorities. Finally, some mothers preferred to have exclusive control over their children, which they believed could be threatened by identifying the father to the authorities.

Pearson and Thoennes (1995) found in their in-hospital paternity establishment study that the chief reasons mothers were unwilling to sign a voluntary paternity acknowledge form at the time of their child's birth was a bad relationship with the baby's father followed by concern about the father gaining custody or visitation rights. They also found that voluntary paternity acknowledgment was much more likely among parents who were financially independent at the time of the child's birth and had never been involved with AFDC. Finally, they found that mothers were more likely to sign voluntary paternity acknowledgment forms if the fathers were employed full-time.

Thus, we find that although the paternity establishment process has changed considerably in the past few years, it is still viewed by many custodial and noncustodial parents with mistrust. In addition, personal reasons often play an important role in not establishing paternity. Finally, AFDC mothers may actually gain more, financially or otherwise, by not establishing paternity. Noncustodial fathers of AFDC children do not see the benefits of establishing paternity and paying formal child support since only the first $50 of their child support payments go directly to their children.

Child Support Enforcement

Most research on child support enforcement focuses on the ineffective nature of the system. Some research, however, has also documented how inflexible and punitive this system is toward noncustodial fathers. We summarize both of these areas below.

An Ineffective System. Most recently, Sorensen (1995) identified three basic weaknesses in the current child support enforcement system: not all custodial families have child support awards; existing awards are not fully paid; and existing award levels do not generally reflect the noncustodial fathers' ability to pay.

According to Sorensen, the largest problem facing the child support enforcement system is a lack of child support awards (1995). In 1991, nearly half (46 percent) of custodial parents had not been awarded child support. However, contrary to popular belief, the lack of child support awards is not simply a matter of increasing paternity establishment. As many as half of all custodial parents who do not have a child support award already have paternity established for their children because they were married at the time of their children's birth. Thus, establishing a child support order for all children who are eligible is a broader problem than just establishing paternity.

The second major problem with the child support enforcement system according to Sorensen (1995) is that child support awards are not fully paid. In 1991, the Census Bureau found that only half of custodial parents owed child support actually received the full amount that they were due (U.S. Census Bureau 1995). Another 25 percent received partial payments and 25 percent received no payments that year. A total of $18 billion of child support was owed in 1991, but only $12 billion was collected, leaving a $6 billion deficit or one third of the total amount owed.

The final problem outlined by Sorensen is that child support awards are quite low and rarely modified to reflect changes in the economic circumstances of custodial or noncustodial parents. Almost all awards are set at the time of the divorce or paternity establishment and are denominated in fixed dollar amounts that do not increase with inflation. Thus, the real value of a child support

award declines over time. In 1991, the mean child support award was $3,321. Under current law in most states, modifying a child support order requires a court proceeding and adjudication, which can be a lengthy, expensive, and adversarial process. It is therefore not surprising that only 25 percent of custodial parents with an order said that their order had ever been modified.

Several researchers have examined why noncustodial parents pay so little child support (Beller and Graham 1986, Beron 1990, Peters et al. 1993, Teachman 1991, Turner and Sorensen 1995, Sonenstein and Calhoun 1990, Haskins 1988, Braver et al. 1991) This literature points to several critical factors in the determination of child support payments. First, nearly all of these studies find that noncustodial parents' ability to pay child support is a strong predictor of paying child support. Second, noncustodial fathers' willingness to pay child support -- typically proxied by time since the marital breakup (or birth of the child in nonmarital unions) and whether or not the father has married someone else -- is found to be positively associated with paying child support. Third, the needs of the custodial family as measured by the number of children eligible for child support and whether or not the mother has remarried are also found to influence child support payments. Finally, studies that have examined the impact of the legal environment have tended to find that it significantly affects child support payments.

An Inflexible and Punitive System. Several aspects of the current child support system deter fathers from being involved in the formal child support system. Our understanding of these barriers, however, tends to be based on anecdotal evidence rather than quantitative research. This area of child support policy needs further examination before we can fully understand how child support enforcement deters fathers from being involved with their children.

Probably the biggest deterrent to formal participation in the child support system is the fact that the welfare agency keeps all but $50 a month of any child support payments made in order to offset welfare costs. Nearly one third of child-support eligible families receive AFDC and thus a sizable minority of these families are affected by the $50 pass-through. Under these circumstances, parents perceive little gain in participating in the official child support system, and fathers are reluctant to contribute child support through official channels since very little of it actually benefits their children (Edin 1994, Bloom and Sherwood 1994).

Another deterrent is that child support guidelines work against informal values and motivations within certain communities. Some studies show that in low-income and minority communities, there are well-developed community norms regarding paternal responsibility for out-of-wedlock children that engender in-kind contributions of food, clothing, toys, childcare or other assistance in lieu of financial contributions (Sullivan 1993, Furstenberg et al. 1992, Klinman et al. 1986, Danziger and Radin 1990, Hardy et al. 1989, Massey 1991, Robinson 1988). Such support agreements are arranged informally within the terms of a community's expectations of paternal responsibility. Mothers and families value this support and consider fathers' sharing of childcare and commitment to their own education and training to be a demonstration of father involvement. However, the child support system does not recognize in-kind contributions or time spent providing childcare. In addition, fathers are given no "time off" from support obligations to pursue further education or vocational training that could enhance their future earnings (Furstenberg et al. 1992, Watson 1992). In these ways, child support enforcement practices that only value cash assistance are at odds with community values and practices regarding support.

Pirog-Good (1993) found that young fathers were willing to participate in alternative means of involvement with their children when they could not meet their financial obligation. The Indianapolis Teen Alternative Parenting Project (TAPP) allowed fathers to pay part of their weekly

child support obligation through in-kind payments or credits for regular visitation, GED study, parenting classes, or vocational training.

Another deterrent to fathers' participation is perceived unfairness in the child support enforcement system. One aspect of this system that is unfair to noncustodial fathers is that most states allow child support orders to be established retroactively to the birth of the child in nonmarital situations or to the date of marital dissolution, even though no action to obtain paternity was taken until much later. In-kind or informal support provided by the noncustodial father prior to the establishment of paternity will not be recognized in lieu of child support payments. This aspect of child support enforcement is particularly unfair because retroactive establishment of child support is most frequently sought in AFDC cases, when the state is the beneficiary of such support arrears. In non-AFDC cases, support obligations are typically only retroactive back to the date that the petition for establishment of the order was filed with the court.

Furthermore, until 1993, states could obligate noncustodial fathers to pay for all of their children's prior welfare costs through a retroactive child support order. In 1993, the federal government issued their interpretation of federal law and said that any retroactive support order for a IV-D case had to be in accordance with current state child support guidelines. This means that retroactive support orders for AFDC cases must now be based on noncustodial fathers' current or earlier income and not on the size of the welfare debt incurred by their children.

States can also order noncustodial fathers to pay child support based on their potential earnings ability even though they do not have a job at the time. Furthermore, most states have established a minimum child support order of anywhere from $25 to $100 a month. Thus, someone who was in prison for 5 years could owe anywhere from $1500 to $6000 once he got out, a substantial debt for anyone, but especially an ex-convict who will most likely find it very difficult to find and keep a job.

Child support guidelines also tend to be regressive, requiring low-income noncustodial fathers to pay a larger share of their income toward child support than higher income fathers (Sorensen 1995). This regressivity is due, in part, to the fact that child support guidelines are based on the needs of children, which do not vary as much as income. States could reduce the negative effects of child support payments for low-income noncustodial fathers by including a "self-support reserve" in their child support guidelines, but few states do so. This reserve would allow noncustodial fathers to discontinue paying child support once their incomes fell below a certain level.

Furthermore, since 1986 Congress has prohibited courts from forgiving or reducing child support arrearages. More specifically, any payment of child support, on and after the date due, is considered a judgement by operation of law, which cannot be retroactively modified by the court. This has meant that if a formal modification is not obtained when circumstances change, child support orders must be paid in full. But, child support awards are rarely adjusted because modifications require a court proceeding, which is costly and time consuming. This negatively affects noncustodial fathers whose circumstances change. For example, one court ruled that a noncustodial father was required to pay all child support arrears to the custodial mother, even though the noncustodial father had custody of the child during the period that the arrears accumulated (Upton 1990).

Despite the lack of ability to pay child support exhibited by many noncustodial fathers of AFDC children, welfare policy does not extend AFDC services to these parents (Mellgren 1993). Custodial mothers who receive AFDC are also eligible for food stamps and Medicaid, but

noncustodial fathers of AFDC children are not. Even the JOBS program that assists AFDC recipients in finding a job is not available to noncustodial fathers of AFDC children (except in a few demonstration states), despite the fact that the JOBS program could assist these fathers in finding a job, which in turn could lead to further child support payments.

One demonstration project that has attempted to alter the child support enforcement and welfare system to better serve noncustodial fathers of AFDC children is the Parents' Fair Share Project, conducted by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation. The project has been operating out of approximately nine sites and was funded by a consortium of private foundations and public agencies. The project has attempted to establish a "new social contract" for noncustodial parents of AFDC children -- one that expects them to support their children and to take steps to become self-sufficient, while the government agrees to provide employment and training services and other services to help them do so. It serves noncustodial parents of AFDC children who are delinquent in their child support payments, most of whom are referred to the program by the court. The program has four core components: employment and training, enhanced child support enforcement, peer support, and mediation services.

The Parents' Fair Share Project has amply demonstrated the institutional challenges that face the child support and welfare system in serving noncustodial fathers of AFDC children (Bloom and Sherwood 1994). Both the child support and welfare agencies are generally unfamiliar with the notion of making short-term service investments in noncustodial parents for the sake of increasing their ability to pay child support and reduce future welfare costs. In fact, many of these agencies viewed this approach as "coddling" noncustodial parents.

Fathers' Access to and Involvement with Their Children

Visitation and custody of children has not been one of the mandates of the child support enforcement system. Each state has its own laws regarding visitation and custody, but it has not been the responsibility of the child support enforcement system to enforce those laws. The main reason the child support enforcement system has not addressed these issues is because its primary mission has been to promote the financial well-being of the children involved. Evidence regarding the role of visitation and custody in promoting the financial well-being of children has been conflicting. Some work shows that increased access to children promotes child support payments, while other research finds no significant relationship between the two.

Nonetheless, public perception has changed regarding fathers' rights to access to their children and this has begun to influence public policy. Congress approved access and visitation demonstration projects in 1988 as part of the Family Support Act. These demonstrations found that mediation did work to establish more parenting plans and it improved child support compliance. The more conflictual situations, however, did not appear to benefit from these services. Continued public pressure in this area resulted in additional access and visitation demonstration grants in last year's welfare reform legislation that passed Congress but was vetoed by President Clinton. Each state would have received a block grant to conduct a demonstration in this area.

Most research on this subject has tended to document the extent to which noncustodial fathers are involved with their children. Unfortunately, only one nationally representative survey--the 1988 National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH)--has asked noncustodial fathers directly about the extent to which they are involved with their children. Research has shown, however, that noncustodial fathers, especially fathers of children born out of wedlock, are seriously

underrepresented in these data (Seltzer and Brandreth 1994). Because of this underrepresentation, Seltzer and Brandreth focus their research on parents who had been previously married. They find that noncustodial fathers who are separated from their first wife have been so for an average of 7 years and that 83 percent of these fathers reported that they visited their children from their first marriage at least once during the last year. Some 56 percent said they visited their children at least once a month.

The NSFH also asks custodial parents about the frequency of contacts that their children have had with the noncustodial parent. Seltzer (1991) has examined these data and found that 71 percent of these children visited with their noncustodial parent at least once during the past year and that 43 percent visited monthly with their noncustodial parent. Furthermore, she found that children born outside of marriage were much less likely to have seen their noncustodial parent during the past year than children born while their parents were married. Only 60 percent of children born out of wedlock saw their noncustodial parent during the past year, while 82 percent of children born to married parents saw their noncustodial parent during the past year.

Several studies have examined the factors that influence visitation among divorced families (Braver et al. 1993, Seltzer et al. 1989, Arditti and Keith 1993). These studies typically find that the frequency of visitation tends to decline with the following factors: time since the divorce, geographic distance between father and children, a child-parent relationship that was distant before the divorce, and a father's perception that he has little influence over his children's upbringing.

Much of our understanding of fathers' involvement with their children who are born out of wedlock has been provided by analyses of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (Lerman 1993), ethnographic studies (Sullivan 1993, Anderson 1993), analyses of small samples (Danziger and Radin 1990), or data from programs designed to assist low-income fathers (Sander 1993, Bloom and Sherwood 1994). Lerman reports that many young unwed fathers remain in close contact with their children, at least according to their own reports. Nearly half reported that they visited their youngest child at least once per week. Only 20 percent admitted they never visited their children or visited only once a year. These responses by fathers show a higher amount of visitation than do responses provided by mothers for a slightly different sample. Using mothers' reports of visitation on a sample of young children born out of wedlock, Mott (1990) estimated that nearly 40 percent of noncustodial fathers visited once per week but about one-third either never visited or visited only once a year.

Lerman also finds that young unwed fathers lose contact with their children as their children age and as the geographic distance between them and their children increases. Furthermore, unwed fathers who rarely or never visit their children are the least likely to pay child support. Thus, he concludes that there are two broad patterns of fathering among young unwed fathers. About half of them live near their children, visit them often, and pay child support. The other half only rarely visit their children and usually make no child support payments. This portrayal, however, is linked to the age of the children. By the time children reach 6 or 7 years old, over one-third of fathers have stopped visiting their children altogether.

This general view of young unwed fathers' involvement with their children is confirmed by the other studies conducted in this area. Danziger and Radin interviewed 289 young AFDC mothers in Wisconsin about the extent of fathers' involvement in the lives of their children. They found that these young fathers were involved in the areas of childcare, decision making, and expressions of nurturance, but that the amount of involvement declined as the child aged. They also found that a young man's work behavior played an important part in his expression of fatherhood and in the

extent to which the teen mother permitted him to be involved in fathering. Massey (1991), surveying 50 teen mothers about their attitudes toward their baby's father, found that 57 percent said the father was at the hospital at the time of the birth, and 67 percent said that the father visited the babies regularly. According to Massey, while some fathers do deny paternity and do not provide support, a significant portion of unmarried teen fathers accept paternity and provide some kind of support. This support is sometimes given regularly, but is typically offered only at the fathers' convenience. Her findings support Robinson's claims (1988) that many teen fathers have contact with their children and that two-thirds provide some kind of contribution to their children. However, this involvement and support can be tenuous, and often slackens after the child is two years of age.

Data from teen parenting and fatherhood development programs substantiate a vision that young fathers are dedicated at least initially to being involved with their children. Sander's (1993) report on the Teen Father Collaboration indicated that nearly all young fathers desired involvement with their children and that 82 percent saw their children frequently. Nearly three-quarters attempted to make financial contributions to the child and others made in-kind contributions. The Young Unwed Fathers Project found similar results (Achatz and MacAllum 1994). Nearly all of the fathers surveyed in this project said that they wanted to play an active role in the lives of their children.

The Parents' Fair Share Project has also shown that noncustodial fathers of AFDC children care deeply about their children, see them regularly, and think it is important to support them (Bloom and Sherwood 1994). However, it was also clear that fathers' actual payment patterns were affected not only by a lack of income, but also by the state of their relationships with the custodial parent and their frustration with the child support enforcement and welfare systems. All of these factors led many noncustodial fathers to draw a sharp distinction between the general concept of supporting their children and the specific reality of paying child support through the formal system.

These studies amply suggest that many fathers do want to be involved, but suffer from economic disadvantages and a lack of skills and resources that inhibit or undermine these desires over time. At the same time, personal and community barriers can also exist. Furstenberg et al. (1992) found that relations between men and women in some communities are permeated by mistrust and ongoing struggles over support, visitation, and relationship issues, struggles that can undermine fathers' commitment to remaining involved. Anderson (1993) also found that some young unwed fathers operate within gender and sexual codes that discourage responsible behavior and emotional involvement with their children or sexual partners. Taylor (1990) likewise portrays young men of color as inhabiting a "subculture of disengagement" that, although less stark than that of Anderson's, encourages criminal activity and results from a lack of legitimate social and economic opportunities. These views contrast with those of Sullivan (1993), who came to know young unwed fathers who frequently visited their children and who paid child support when they were able to find jobs. These young men were frequently assisted by their family and kin so that they could meet their parental obligations. The conflicting results of these studies suggest that for some men, the personal and community barriers to involvement are insurmountable, while for others they are not.

Some research has attempted to ascertain the extent to which visitation influences child support payments and vice-versa among divorced families. Seltzer et al. (1989) found that visiting and paying child support are complementary activities after divorce, reflecting common demographic

Nord, and Zill (1983) also found a positive relationship between child support payment and frequent contact with children as did Teachman (1991). Other studies, however, have failed to substantiate a relationship between greater father involvement and child support payment. Arditti and Keith (1993) found that neither visitation frequency nor quality has any bearing on child support payment, a finding that supports several other studies that failed to find a relationship between greater father involvement and child support payment (Berkman 1986, Pearson & Thoennes 1988). These studies point to other factors such as fathers' socioeconomic status and proximity to children's residence as being more influential in determining the payment of child support.

Several papers have described the legal rights of unwed fathers (Walters and Elam 1985, Howe 1993). They find that nonmarital fathers have a legal right to custody of and visitation with their children as long as they have indicated their interest in their children in the ways sanctioned by state law. If fathers have had the opportunity to legally claim their children and have chosen not to, their rights as parents are in jeopardy. Because there are differences among states in the acceptable methods of establishing paternity and legitimizing children, unwed fathers who wish to protect their relationship with their children need to inform themselves of the law in their state.

A SUMMARY OF BARRIERS IN CHILD SUPPORT POLICY THAT DISCOURAGE NONCUSTODIAL FATHERS' INVOLVEMENT

Based on research to date, fathers face the following barriers to participating in their children's lives--financially or otherwise--that are perpetuated by the current child support system.

- The process of paternity establishment, while much improved in many locations, can still be very slow and excessively court administered. It also tends to lead to a child support obligation that, in many cases, is not in line with noncustodial fathers' ability to pay child support.
- The AFDC program taxes child support income at 100 percent, except for the first $50 per month, which produces a serious disincentive for noncustodial fathers to pay child support through the formal child support system.
- Child support policies are not designed to accommodate noncustodial fathers who have a limited ability to pay child support. The CSE system does not allow noncustodial fathers to provide in-kind or child care assistance in order to meet their child support obligation when their incomes decline. In addition, awards are rarely modified during periods of unemployment which can lead to significant arreages for noncustodial fathers, which cannot be forgiven by the courts.
- Child support and welfare policies are not designed to assist noncustodial fathers in their efforts to find work in order to pay child support. The AFDC program, for example, does not extend the JOBS program to noncustodial parents with children receiving AFDC, a program that provides employment services to custodial parents receiving AFDC.
- Child support programs tend to be silent regarding noncustodial fathers' involvement in their children's lives beyond their financial obligation, ignoring such issues as visitation and custody. This limitation inhibits fathers' involvement with their children.

Directions for Future Research

Current research on child support policy is rarely viewed from the point of view of fathers' involvement in the lives of their children. Our literature review did not find a thorough analysis of child support policy and how it affects fathers' involvement. Further research is needed that clearly documents how the current child support system results in barriers to fathers' involvement in the lives of their offspring. For example: How many noncustodial fathers pursue paternity establishment and what experiences do they have? How many noncustodial fathers experience periods of unemployment without a modification in their child support award? How many need employment and training services? How many noncustodial fathers desire increased access to their children and what experiences do they have in their efforts to achieve greater access?

Future research also needs to consider effective alternatives to our current system. For example, How do we design public policy to promote noncustodial fathers' involvement? Can we identify "best practices" regarding child support policies that encourage noncustodial fathers' involvement with their children? Does paternity establishment encourage father involvement? Can employment enabling policies help noncustodial fathers meet their financial obligations? Can employment enabling policies in conjunction with other services promote other forms of involvement? Can public policy use increased access to children as a way to increase child support payments and other forms of parental involvement?

REFERENCES

Achatz, M. & MacAllum C. (1994). Young Unwed Fathers: Report from the Field. *Public/Private Ventures Report*, Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures.

Adams, C.F., Jr., Landsbergen, D., & Cobler, L. (1992). Welfare reform and paternity establishment: A social experiment. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 11(4), 665-687.

Adams, C.F., Jr., Landsbergen, D. & Hecht, D. (1992). Interorganizational dependencies and paternity establishment. In D. Meyer (Ed.), *Paternity establishment: A public policy conference, Vol. 1: Overview, History and Current Practice*, (pp. 83-108). Madison, WI: Institute for Research on Poverty.

Anderson, E. (1993). Sex Codes and Family Life among Poor Inner-City Youths. In R. Lerman and T. Ooms, editors, *Young Unwed Fathers: Changing Roles and Emerging Policies*, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Arditti, J. & Keithy, T. (1993). Visitation Frequency, Child Support Payment, and the Father-Child Relationship Postdivorce. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 55: 699-612.

Bassi, L., Aron, L., Barnow, B., & Pande, A. (1990). *Estimates of Expenditures on Children and Child Support Guidelines*, Washington, D.C.: Lewinf/ICF.

Beller, A. H., & Graham, J. W. (1986b). The determinants of child support income. *Social Science Quarterly, 67*, 353-364.

Berkman, B.G. (1986). Father Involvement and Regularity of Child Support in Post-Divorce Families. *Journal of Divorce*, 9: 67-74.

Beron, K. (1990). Policy Issues and Child Support Payment Behavior: Empirical Findings. *Contemporary Policy Issues*, 8(1):124-33.

Bloom, D. & Sherwood, K. (1994). Matching Opportunities to Obligations: Lessons for Child Support Reform from the Parents' Fair Share Pilot Phase. *Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation Report*, New York City, NY: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation.

Braver, S., Fitzpatrick, P. & Bay, R.C. (1991). Noncustodial Parent's Report of Child Support Payments. *Family Relations*, 40: 180-5.

Braver, S., Wolchik, S., Sandler, I., Sheets, V., Fogas, B. & Bay, R.C. (1993). A Longitudinal Study of Noncustodial Parents: Parents without Children. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 7(1) 9-22.

Danziger, S. & Radin, N. (1990). Absent does not equal uninvolved: Predictors of fathering in teen mother families. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 52*, 636-642.

Duncan, G.J. & Hoffman, S.D. (1985). A Reconsideration of the Economic Consequences of Marital Dissolution. *Demography*, 22(4).

Edin, K. (1994). Single Mothers and Absent Fathers: The Possibilities and Limits of Child Support Policy. *Center for Urban Policy Research Report*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University.

Furstenberg, F. Jr. (1995). Fathering in the Inner City: Paternal Participation and Public Policy. In Marsiglio, W., editor, *Fatherhood: Contemporary Theory, Research, and Social Policy*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Furstenberg, F. Jr, Nord, C.W., Peterson, J. & Zill, N. (1983). The Life Course of Children of Divorce: Marital Disruption and Parental Contact. *American Sociologial Review*, 48: 656-668.

Furstenberg, F. F., Jr. Sherwood, K. & Sullivan, M.L. (1992). *Caring and paying: What fathers and mothers say about child support.* New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation.

Garfinkel, I. & Oellerich, D. (1989). Noncustodial fathers' ability to pay child support. *Demography, 26*(2), 219-233.

Garfinkel, I., McLanahan, S., & Hanson, T. (1995). A Portrait of Nonresident Fathers. *Office of Population Research Discussion Paper (September),* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University.

Hardy, J. B., Duggan, A. K., Masnyk, K., & Pearson, C. (1989). Fathers of children born to young urban mothers. *Family Planning Perspectives, 21*(4), 159-163.

Haskins, R. (1988). Child support: A father's view. In S. Kamerman & A. Kahn (Eds.), *Child support: From debt collection to social policy,* (pp. 306-327). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Hill, M.S. (1988). The Role of Economic Resources and Dual-Family Status in Child Support Payments. *Institute for Social Research Report*, University of Michigan.

Howe, R.-A. (1993). Legal Rights and Obligations: An Uneven Evolution. In Lerman, R. & Ooms, T., editors, *Young Unwed Fathers: Changing Roles and Emerging Policies*, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Klinman, D., Sander, J., Rosen, J, & Longo, K.R. (1986). The Teen Father Collaboration: A demonstration and research model. In A. B. Elster & M. E. Lamb (Eds.), *Adolescent fatherhood,* (pp. 155-170). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Lerman, R. (1993). A National Profile of Young Unwed Fathers. In Lerman, R. & Ooms, T., editors, *Young Unwed Fathers: Changing Roles and Emerging Policies*, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Massey, G. (1991). The flip side of teen mothers: A look at teen fathers. In B. P. Bowser (Ed.), *Black male adolescents: Parenting and education in community context,* (pp. 117-128).. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

McLindon, J.B. (1987). Separate But Unequal: The Economic Disaster of Divorce for Women and Children. *Family Law Quarterly*, 21(3).

Meili, M.S. (1992). A brief history of the legal structure for paternity establishment in the United States. In D. Meyer (Ed.), *Paternity establishment : A public policy conference,* (Vol. 1: Overview, history and current practice, pp. 31-42). Madison, WI: Institute for Research on Poverty.

Mellgren, L. (1993). Creating Federal Leadership in Research and Policy Development In Lerman, R. & Ooms, T., editors, *Young Unwed Fathers: Changing Roles and Emerging Policies*, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Meyer, D.. (1992). Paternity and Public Policy: Findings, Policy Issues, and Future Research Needs. *Paternity Establishment: A Public Policy Conference. Vol.1:Overview , History, and Current Practice, Insitute for Research on Poverty Special Report (Aug.).* Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin.

Miller, C., Garfinkel, I. & McLanahan, S. (1994). Child Support: Can Fathers Pay More? *Office of Population Research Discussion Paper (June)*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University.

Mott, F. (1990). When is a father really gone? *Demography*, 27(4), 499-517.

Mott, F. (1985). Evaluation of Fertility Data and Preliminary Analytical Results from the 1983 (5th Round) Survey of the National Longitudinal Surveys of Work Experience of Youth. *Center for Human Resource Research Report*, Ohio State University.

Nichols-Casebolt, A. (1986). The Economic Impact of Child Support Reform on the Poverty Status of Custodial and Noncustodial Families. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 48: 875-880.

Nichols-Casebolt, A. (1988). Paternity adjudication: In the best interests of the out-of-wedlock child? *Child Welfare, 67*(3), 245-254.

Nichols-Casebolt, A. (1992). Paternity establishment in Arizona: A case study of the process and its outcomes. In D. Meyer (Ed.), *Paternity establishment: A public policy conference, Vol. 2: Studies of the circumstances of mothers and fathers, (*pp. 55-104. Madison, WI: Institute for Research on Poverty.

Pearson, J., & Thoennes, N. (1995). The Child Support Improvement Project: Paternity Establishment. *Center for Policy Research Report*, Denver, CO: Center for Policy Research.

Pearson, J. & Thoennes, N. (1988). Supporting Children After Divorce: The Influence of Custody on Child Support Levels and Payments. *Family Law Quarterly*, 22: 319-339.

Penkrot. J. (1989). Can AFDC parents pay child support? *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, 8*(1), 104-110.

Peters, E.H., Argys, L.M., Maccoby, E.E. & Nmookin, R.H. (1993). Enforcing Divorce Settlements: Evidence from Child Support compliance and Award Modifications. *Demography* 30 (4): 719-735.

Phillips, E. & Garfinkel, I. (1993). Income Growth among Nonresident Fathers: Evidence from Wisconsin. *Demography*, 30(2): 227-241.

Pirog-Good, M. & Good, D.H. (1995). Child Support Enforcement for Teenage Fathers: Problems and Prospects. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 14(1): 25-42.

Pirog-Good, M. (1993). In-Kind Contributions as Child Support: The Teen Alternative Parenting Program. In Lerman, R. & Ooms, T., editors, *Young Unwed Fathers: Changing Roles and Emerging Policies*, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Robinson, B. (1988a). *Teenage fathers*. Lexington, MA: D>C> Heath and Co.

Robinson, B. (1988b). Teenage pregnancy from the father's perspective. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 58* (1), 46-51.

Sander, J. (1993). Service Programs to Help Unwed Fathers. In Lerman, R. & Ooms, T., editors, *Young Unwed Fathers: Changing Roles and Emerging Policies*, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Seltzer, J. (1991). Relationships between Fathers and Children Who Live Apart: The Father's Role After Separation. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 53: 79-101.

Seltzer, J., Schaeffer, N.C. & Charng, H.-W. (1989). Family Ties after Divorce: The Relationship between Visiting and Paying Child Support. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 51: 1013-32.

Seltzer, J. & Brandreth, Y. (1994). What Fathers Say About Involvement with Children After Separation. *Journal of Family Issues*, 15(1): 49-77.

Solomon, C. (1989). The Child Support Enforcement Program: Policy and Practice. CRS Report for Congress.

Sonenstein, F. & Calhoun C. (1990). Determinants of Child Support: A Pilot Survey of Absent Parents. *Contemporary Policy Issues*, 8: 75- 94.

Sonenstein, F.L., Holcomb, P.A. & Seefeldt, K.S. (1993). What Works Best in Improving Paternity Rates? *Public Welfare*, (Fall) 27-42.

Sorensen, E. (1995). Noncustodial Fathers: Can They Afford to Pay More Child Support? *Urban Institute Report*, Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute.

Stier, H. & Tienda, M. (1993). Are Men Marginal to the Family: Insights from Chicago's Inner City. In Hood, J., editor, *Men, Work, and Family*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Sullivan, M. (1993). Young Fathers and Parenting in Two Inner-City Neighborhoods. In Lerman, R. & Ooms, T., editors, *Young Unwed Fathers: Changing Roles and Emerging Policies*, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Sullivan, M.L. (1989). Absent fathers in the inner city. *Annals, 501*, 48-58.

Taylor, R. (1990). African-American inner-city youth and the subculture of disengagement. In D. Jones & S. Battle (Eds.), *Teenage pregnancy: Developing strategies for change in the twenty-first century*, (pp. 15-24). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Teachman, J. (1991). Who pays? The receipt of child support in the United States. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 52, 689-699.

Turner, M. & Sorensen, E. (1995). Noncustodial Fathers and their Child Support Payments. Conference paper presented at the annual meetings of the Association of Public Policy Analysis and Management (November).

U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, P60-187. (1995) Child Support for Custodial Mothers and Fathers: 1991. Washington, SC:U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. General Accounting Office. (1987) Child Support: Need to Improve Efforts to Identify Fathers and Obtain Support Orders. Washington, DC:GAO-HRD-87-37.

Upton, M. C. (1990). The Bradly Bill Goes to Court: Some Recent Decisions on Retroactive Modification. *Child Support Report*, Vol. XII, No. 8.

Walters, L. H., & Elam, A. W. (1985). The father and the law. *American Behavioral Scientist, 29*(1), 78-111.

Watson, B. H. (1992). *Young Unwed Fathers Pilot Project: Initial implementation report.* Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

Wattenberg, E. (1993). Paternity Actions and Young Fathers. In Lerman, R. & Ooms, T., editors, *Young Unwed Fathers: Changing Roles and Emerging Policies*, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Williams, R., Venohr, J. & Baxter, D. (1995). Massachusetts Paternity Acknowledgment Program Implementation Analysis and Program Results. *Policy Studies Report*, Denver, CO: Policy Studies Inc.